

# University of Lowell

## Office of Public Relations

One University Avenue, Lowell, Massachusetts 01854, Telephone: (617) 452-5000

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Paul F. Marion

### UNIVERSITY OF LOWELL PROFESSOR ENVISIONS MUSIC CAREERS PROGRAM

LOWELL, MASS. - Music in this country has developed into a complicated big business, and the University of Lowell is exploring new ways to meet changing professional demands. According to Dr. Rawn Spearman, a professor in Lowell's College of Music, the challenge music educators must face in coming decades is, "Where and how do we direct our students for employment?"

The cliché of meeting a trained musician with two hands on a taxi steering wheel instead of a Steinway keyboard is a familiar story to Rawn Spearman. As a music teacher and seasoned performer who has appeared on Broadway, concert stages, and television, he first began to question the responsibilities of music educators while working as an arts administrator in New York City. Having experienced the complex world of music and seen the unpredictable nature of performing careers, he realized the importance of preparing music students for life after graduation.

Today, the music industry is growing at twice the rate of the Gross National Product. Music is a major part of the business of arts in the United States. The Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities estimates that the arts are a \$100,000,000 a year industry in this state alone, and that the arts employ nearly 10,000 persons and account for another \$150,000,000 in spending statewide.

Obviously, not all music students find work as performers or teachers, yet few are made aware of the range of alternative careers during their school years. Dr. Spearman envisions a program at the University of Lowell in "The Business of Music," which would expose students to various aspects of the music industry. The focus of the proposed program would demand that students be skilled in both management and musical concepts.

more

The music industry has myriad facets. For example, a recent Music Educators Journal article lists the people employed in the production of one hit record: "composer, lyricist, publisher (and his staff of specialists), record producer, arranger, recording artist, musicians, conductor, music contractor, recording engineer, recording technicians, pressing and packaging specialists, record company administrators, promotion specialists, lawyers, persons in performance and mechanical rights, record distributors, rack jobbers, retail salespersons, disc jockeys, record reviewers, and so on."

One of the first steps Rawn Spearman took to begin introducing the Business of Music idea at the College of Music was to organize a seminar consisting of Boston and local music merchandisers in 1977. The following year there was another panel involved with music management. Special guests included the manager of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the educational director of the New York Philharmonic. Spearman considered these sessions rare opportunities for students to question professionals about musical careers.

"I started this dream in 1977," says Spearman. Since then he has carefully planned the program and sent proposals to national Foundations, hoping to attract funds to begin a pilot program leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Music. The curriculum would include such courses as administration, business law, marketing, personnel practices, as well as theory, survey of music history, and principles and practices in music education.

Enlarging the scope of music education is essential if music schools want to stay lively, according to Spearman. "I expect the music curricula in the next decade to take a definite turn to create a new kind of music major who knows not only how to perform and teach, but also knows how to go into a community and corral all artistic forces." With this in mind, he hopes a Business of Music program will develop multi-dimensional graduates who can adapt to circumstances in the changing world. He believes, "Those who will get the jobs

orchestras, drama, art and dance, and also sees increased involvement through Continuing Education careers in music. Arts administration on the federal, state, and local levels is another area that will open as arts agencies proliferate in communities, both urban and rural.

One of the first Universities to develop a program related to the music industry was the University of Miami in 1967. A key feature of this program is a senior year internship in merchandising, directed by Dr. Alfred Reed, a friend and colleague of Dr. Spearman. This program is highly successful, and Spearman would like to establish a similar one here.

When asked about the sensitive issue of suggesting to some young persons that they forfeit dreams of a performing career, Dr. Spearman replies, "The person may not be on stage every day, but he is still connected with a music related career in some way . . . someone has to take care of business." The broken dreams of an unsuccessful singer or the glory of a gold record are not the only possibilities. Students are aware of the needs, yet the preparation for alternative musical careers is not often available in today's traditional music college setting.

Dr. Spearman hopes to bring a Business of Music program to the University of Lowell for the benefit of students entering the College of Music in coming years. His plan would integrate music and business, with the College of Music and College of Management Science working together in this effort. By exposing interested students to alternative careers in the field of music while making them business-wise, he believes music educators will be heeding their responsibility to ready students for futures in which they can apply their learning while satisfying their creative natures.